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WILD VIOLETS

MARY BASKIN.

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WILD VIOLETS;

A Collection of Poems and Sketches.

BY

MARY BASKIN.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE

REV. W. MORLEY PUNSHON, LL.D.

London:

F. E. LONGLEY, 29, FARRINGDON STREET.

MELBOURNE: GEORGE ROBERTSON.

1873.

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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE been asked by the Authoress, who with so much industry and taste has gathered and grouped these "Wild Violets," to write a brief introduction to her book, and with this request I comply cheerfully.

I have much sympathy with the object which has enlisted her ready pen.* The faculty which appreciates the beautiful; the fresh enthusiasm of young hearts; the fancy which pours upon common things the rose-light of its own dreams; the power to express what a thousand others have felt, in apt and glowing

* The whole of the profits arising from the sale of this work will be given towards the building of class-rooms in connection with the Beovis Town Wesleyan Chapel, Southampton.

words,—all these are gifts of God, and when there is a recognition of this truth, and His own endowments are consecrated to His own service, they must have callous hearts who can refuse sympathy, or forbear welcome.

Many of these modest sketches have already appeared in the columns of various periodicals. They make no pretensions to profound thought, nor masculine scholarship; they do not hover mysteriously in the border-land between faith and doubt; they do not seek to win favour by startling eccentricities of matter or style. Their region is the home-region of human work, and tenderness, and sorrow,—that region in which there is so much that is romantic, and so much that is familiar,—that region thick with the tragedies of every day, with deeds of unnoticed heroism, with dark, sad records of sin,—this is the field which the Authoress has chosen for her province of intellectual work; and she brings to her task a keen sensitiveness of wrong, a thorough and hearty

abhorrence of it, an earnest purpose and a refined spirit, an intensely human sympathy, and some portion of the bright dower of genius; and, above all, a sacred sense of stewardship which casts at the feet of the Divine Master all the garlands which she delights to weave.

The "Wild Violets" have the scent of the hedge-row, and many a passer-by may be refreshed with their fragrance, and think in the winter-time of the hope and sweetness of the spring.

W. MORLEY PUNSHON.

WILD VIOLETS.

IN the dreamy, delicious days of the balmy Spring, when the mother earth is again clothing herself with her verdant covering, and the stream, released from the tyrant grasp of King Frost, ripples merrily on in its crystal beauty, who has not wandered through the shady glens of some favourite wood in search of the fragrant purple flower that, as the familiar face of an old and loved friend, claims a glad welcome, rekindling in our hearts a grateful love for its Creator?

> "God does not send us strange flowers every year,
> When the spring winds blow o'er pleasant places;
> The same dear things lift up the same fair faces—
> The violet is here."

Who can look upon its transparent petals, in their modest, unpretending beauty, without an

inward aspiration after their unrevealed sweetness? Half-hidden in its greenwood bower, as if shrinking from the eye of man, it becomes the type of a life hidden in God. Simple and content, shedding sweetness and perfume on the air, with a winsome loveliness all its own, it beams forth in humble lowliness, fit emblem of that Christian meekness which, with loving sympathy and genial kindness, cheers and gladdens the human heart. With a modest, unassuming gentleness, unconscious of its own fragrance, it sheds around an untold influence and beauty, and becomes to us a revelation of God's wondrous goodness.

In childhood's happy days, when free from care, we made the woods echo with exultant shouts, and ring with the merry laughter of young hearts, the violet peeped out from its grassy bed, and smiled on our innocent pleasure, only to be plucked by eager hands and conveyed to a loving mother at home. Those woods echo now with the mirth and gladness of other children; but a violet brings back the memory of the happy days with tenfold power.

Some who plucked the wee, transparent blossoms with us are now ranging the fairer fields of the Eden above, unfettered by mortality.

Others are toiling in distant lands, from whence the music of their voices cannot reach us; but each returning Spring brings the flower that carries, in its fairness, the memory of the cherished tones, and, in imagination, recalls the loved faces from the dim vista of the past.

The rose, with regal yet blushing beauty, stands peerless amongst its floral companions; the stately lily rears its head, unrivalled in pure, spotless beauty; but the "sweet tenants of the shade" creep into our hearts and nestle there like a cherished and golden link to the past. The violet is an emblem of faithfulness. When we leave the busy haunts of men behind, and search the banks for our old favourite, we do not find strange flowers there, some species we have never before beheld, but the bright little one we love, speaking of the constant love of God, who, in a world of change, sends us season after season the same sweet, cheerful emblem of His immutability.

It teaches another lesson by its humility. Have you never noticed how, after heavy rain, the petals of the rose have strewn the damp earth, and the cultivated, gorgeous plants ignominiously trailed their beauteous buds and blossoms as if mourning over departed glory?

But the little violet has only bowed under the passing storm; then, when the sun has peered from the edge of a dark cloud, fringing it with light, and again gladdened the earth, it has looked from its leafy bower with richer beauty and additional fragrance, in its very lowliness failing to feel the fierceness of the tempest. So the humble Christian, amid direst storms, hiding in the hollow of the Saviour's hand, losing his own will in the will of his God, can, through the lowliness of his position, smile at the raging of the storm, and gain increased strength and nobleness of character, taking firmer hold upon the promises of One who cannot lie, and realising the fulness of the blessing bestowed upon the meek and lowly in heart.

Have you ever gathered them, and wended your way back through the tall grass, and over the green sward to the sick-room, and watched their effect upon the languid one lying there? The diseased form has seemed to gather fresh strength, and the eyes have glistened with joy, when the wasted hand grasped the simple tokens of God's goodness; they have carried a joy and light with them, and created a thrill of happiness, which the rose, in all her queenliness,

would have failed to awaken. Again, they often—like the manifold mercies of our God—appear unexpectedly, and in some most unlikely nook or spot they peep out like an oasis in the desert, touching a chord in the weary heart, and causing it to respond to its loveliness; they seem to whisper to the wayworn traveller, "we are lowly and small, yet we are loved and sought after; and *you*, though poor and apparently uncared for, may also be loved and sought after: *you* can nestle in some heart and gladden another toil-stained pilgrim, and by the sweet fragrance of your life, win an abiding place for yourself in their affections when your soul has passed through the dim portals of the spirit-world to the God who gave it." It stirs our hearts to seek—not for fame—as, could we exultingly reach its highest pinnacle, it would win for us the admiration (not the love) of some, and expose our sensitive, over-wrought spirits to the cutting shafts and sarcasm of its less favoured votaries;—not to pursue wealth—which allures with its gilded vanities and splendours, only to prove how wearisome and futile are the efforts of its power to satisfy the cravings and aspirations of our immortal spirits;—but to seek, pursue, and hold with

tenacious grasp "the things that are lovely and of good report," that, like the humble, modest loveliness of the violet, our lives may win their way in meekness and fragrance to the hearts of our fellow-creatures by their unassuming works of love, showing forth the praise of the Godhead, whose power we own.

MUSIC.

THE sun was shining brightly, shedding its refulgence upon mansion and cottage, gilding with strange, unearthly beauty the various objects catching its glorious reflection, and casting lengthening shadows upon the forbidding, sombre exterior of the county gaol of W——.

Outside the bustle and noise of the busy, crowded city, away from the workers, the calculating brain, and hard-working hand, high stone walls reared in impenetrable thickness their grey old tops; the ivy seemed to creep closer round the buttresses, like a living creature seeking for sympathy, while the wind chanted a requiem through its quivering tendrils and glossy leaves.

If any inanimate object could strike terror and dismay into human hearts, the massive pillars and dense, gloomy darkness of the prison, with its dark portals and darker cells, would have done so.

The busy hum of the city came with a deadened sound upon its unhappy inmates, as though they, in their wretched despair and guilt, had no part nor lot in the activity of the seething, surging populace of the great world outside the walls.

In one of the cells set apart for condemned criminals, a man crouched upon the straw that served for his bed, his face resolute and hard in its defiance, the lips tightly closed, the eyes full of intense, suppressed scorn and passion —a face deeply marred by sin, yet withal a human one.

The chaplain of the gaol had just left him; he had prayed as man can only plead when he knows that a few fleeting hours will close the career of one steeped in blood-guiltiness and crimes of the deepest dye; but his petitions found no response in the heart of the criminal, and the lips only once opened, and then with coarse rebuff and the stern command, "Let me alone!" accompanied by oaths too fearful to pen.

With a sad heart the servant of God retraced his steps to his home, and entering his study he knelt and pleaded again for the softening influence of the Holy Spirit. Wrestling alone

with God, minutes became hours, and the grey dawn streaked the horizon ere he sought repose.

In the morning he called his little daughter, a child of four summers, and told her he was going to take her with him to the prison. With a child's simple trust in its father, she placed her little hand in his and accompanied him.

When they entered the cell of the condemned man, he gave one glance at the fair-haired child, and then turned his face again to the wall without uttering a word.

The chaplain advanced to the side of the criminal, and said, "I have brought my little girl to see you, and as it must be lonely here, I will leave her until I have been through the other cells."

No response!

He stooped and kissed his child, breathing a silent, heartfelt prayer for the fulfilment of his desire, and asking God's blessing on the method he had adopted to that end.

After he had left, the little girl went up to the man, and in her pretty, loving, innocent way, by no means abashed at the look of his face, tried to engage his attention; but, after a time, becoming wearied with her vain efforts, she

perched herself on the side of the straw bed, and taking off her little blue cloak made a doll of it, singing in low, hushed tones little hymns and lullabies learnt on her mother's knee, and, so occupied, soon forgot the man lying in the corner in his sullen silence.

After a while the chaplain came back, conversing in low tones with the warder of the prison; the child was singing a quaint old religious melody which she had often heard her nurse droning out, but as he opened the door she stopped.

"Go on, Amy dear, I want to hear it," said the chaplain.

Thus encouraged the child again trilled out her simple melody, singing softly and sweetly, as only a child can sing; the condemned man half turned towards her, his mouth quivered, the muscles of his face relaxed, and the tears rolled slowly down the worn, haggard face; clearly and feelingly the chorus rose and fell:—

"I love Jesus, Hallelujah."

Then from the lips of the prisoner came an almost inarticulate, passionate wail, "My God! Oh, my God!" while his strong, manly form writhed and shook in uncontrollable agony.

Music found an entrance, and touched a

long-silent chord in that sin-stricken heart; words had failed, prayers seemed unavailing, but the musical rhythm of a child's simple melody led him back—back, oh how long ago!—to the time when in happy innocence he sat in a Sunday-school, and listened to a faithful teacher showing the way of life. Ah! since then he had forsaken the God of his youth, broken a widowed mother's heart—stricken a wife with sorrow such as only a woman can bear, and live. Now, when hope seemed to have taken its flight, and despair like a brooding demon threw its shadows over his soul, the music of his childhood dispelled the gloom and opened his heart.

Thank God for the music taught in our Sunday-schools!

When the felon could control his agitation and grief, he opened the flood-gates of his soul, and revealed the dense darkness and sin of his past life: truly he had proved the truth of the words of Holy Writ, "The way of transgressors *is* hard." Covering his face with his hands, he groaned, bewailing his desolate lot, the friends he had estranged, his loneliness and despair; but though he had come nigh to the gates of death, they had not closed upon him: there was yet hope; still he was not deserted.

"Deserted? God could separate from his own essence rather!
And Adam's sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father:
Yea, once Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken,
It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'

It went up from the Holy's lips, amid His lost creation
That of the lost no son should use those words of desolation;
That earth's worst frenzies, marring hope, should mar not hope's fruition."

Oh, infinitude of glory, encircle the sinless One! Oh, brightness of the majesty of the Father, emblazon His fame! Oh, multitude that no man can number, bow in adoration! Oh, martyrs who have passed through earthly fires with unscathed spirits, join the song of praise to the Triune God! Oh, prophets with the God-given inspirations, gaze upon the realization of your brightest visions! Oh, spotless angels, unstained and unsullied, sinless from the creation of the world, listen to and cease to wonder at the rapturous outpourings of our thankful songs! Oh, tongues of mortals, raise higher your jubilant hosannas! Oh, feet of saints, be swift to run to do God's will! Oh, hands of God's redeemed, hasten

to unfurl the ever-enduring banner of the cross, and tell a sin-stricken people that desolation and desertion such as the Saviour endured can never darken life of mortal man! The woe indescribable that wrung *His* heart can never wring another's.

The "Saviour of the people, the Friend of Sinners" entered into the heart of the felon, and made it a temple, even the temple of an indwelling God. Day after day he would try to sing the simple strain that first awoke his slumbering conscience, until the time came when, for his crimes, he suffered the penalty of the law; but, thank God! through the instrumentality of a little child's simple song, and the ministry of one of His faithful servants, he died, not without hope, and through the blessed atonement of Christ was freed from his manifold transgressions, and entered the undefiled Paradise of his God.

Blessed music! it fills the universe, thrilling the pulse of the whole creation till only the harsh, discordant strife and din of sin can mar its sweet, pure, and hallowed cadence.

Oh, who can tell the deep, untold power of music to stir the passionate depths of the human heart till the sense of mental enjoyment

and pleasure becomes almost bodily pain, and the over-wrought, tired flesh cries out, "How long, Lord, how long must I carry this soul with its intense cravings, and its deep yearnings, and reachings after the higher and grander life, more spiritual, more heavenly? How long before the glad release comes?"

There is music in the rippling brook; music in the wind as it wooingly whispers through the branches of the moon-silvered trees; music in the roar of the sea, the lashing of its waves, and its ebbing tide lapping the pebbly beach; music in the rapid, rushing, foaming cataract, as, glorying in its freedom and strength, it dashes wildly from rock to rock, or sweeps down the mountain side; music in the hum of the bee as it gathers its winter store; music in the warbling of the feathered songsters of the grove, as they trill out their happy, joyous lays in their Maker's praise; music in the lowing of the cattle; music in the tinkling of the village bells, calling the great and lowly alike to the house of their Creator; music in the sanctuary, as the people pour out their overflowing love from the inmost recesses of their hearts; music in every soul where Jesus reigns, for with Christ in the heart, life is set to sweetest music.

Oh, true, beautiful, yet ethereal thing! Oh, mystic, unfathomable power, condescending to dwell with us, how we love thee! We yield ourselves to thy influence, as with a mighty pulse thou dost stir and rouse our inmost being, granting us a foretaste of heaven's own sweet bliss.

Though the earth were robbed of its revelry, its literature, and its poetry, we would be content if music were left to cheer, to bless, and ennoble us.

Then when our days of sojourning are ended, we would soar far away to a land of golden streets and untold beauty, and with our hearts enlarged and our tastes purified, take up the all-pervading theme, and with skilful hand sweep the celestial harp-strings, waking music whose beauty our most glowing dreams fail to conceive, and, permeated by love, join in the everlasting song which, "like the sound of many waters," calls forth an echo in the hearts of the inheritors of the undefiled and incorruptible mansions of light, through whose pearly gates sorrow and sighing cannot enter, but where all that is joyous, full, and complete shall eternally reign.

GOLDEN LINKS.

IT was *only* a little tiny glove, the fingers all worn and in holes, and a little wee frock into which the mother had worked a woman's brightest dreams and most visionary hopes; but she stands looking at it with sorrowful eyes and aching heart, and in imagination sees the dimpled, roguish smiles, and the sunny curls falling over the open brow of the winsome little owner. She seems to hear again his pretty, innocent, mirthful prattle, that to her was the sweetest music in the universe, and feel the childish caress of those little fingers, soft as velvet, as they lovingly smoothed out the traces of care from her brow; she lives her childhood over again in his while in fancy listening to his lisping, half-perplexed questions about the things that formed *his little world;* and she longs with an intense, passionate yearning to fill her empty arms again, and clasp her little treasure once more to her heart as she used to do.

Then she remembers a little waxen form stonily cold, with the beautiful silky eyelashes resting lovingly on the marble cheek, a little body straightened for the grave, the tiny feet still, the dimpled and once busy hands folded over the lifeless breast, while the golden curls sweep the pillows of his coffin.

Now there remains *only* the little daisy-covered mound marking the spot where the still limbs lie. Only these? oh no! Thank God, not these *only!* A beautiful birdie plumed its wings and soared above, and there graced its native home, even heaven; and a link drew the mother to her child and its home, *even the link of love.*

Only a curl of dark, rich, raven hair! found inside a packet of letters, old and worn with constant perusal, here and there blotted and stained by a tear. To the outside world the possessor was known as a cheerful "old maid," who lightened another's load, and carried out the *unfashionable* precept of "bearing one another's burdens." The signature these letters bore was that of a young missionary, who had gone out from his home and all he loved in his native land, burning with zeal for Christ's cause, and

willing to lay down his life for the truth; and on the message of love penned in his dying moments she had written,—no bitter repinings at God's will, no impatient longings for the presence that had been denied, but simply this: "My love has gone home; my life's story is ended, but it is another and greater link in the chain that binds me to heaven; and while the body lies mouldering in the grave, the spirit has put on its beautiful garments and soared unfettered away, to regain the Christ it served on earth, and to hear the glad sound of—'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"

Only a flower! And that flower one of the simplest—a wild rose. Not even in its natural freshness and beauty, but as it lay in her hand all faded and crumpled, she gazed upon it till her soft hazel eyes were dim, and the workings of her fair young face showed the intensity of the pain and anguish by which her heart had been wrung.

'Twas a slight girlish form, but the deep black robe gracing her lithe form, and the small white cap on her head told their own sad tale, although the face showed plainly that the sorrow was overcome by the peace of the soul within.

That desk lying open before her contained many another sweet memento of the happy past, which had been given by the same beloved hand; and yet this one simple treasure had been singled out as the most precious of all. It was *his* gift when down in the thickly-wooded glen he had told her of his love. Oh, how long ago it seemed, though only three brief years had passed! The birds were singing; the whole earth seemed full of joy and gladness, and they were happy—happy in God and each other. He had gathered this one little flower from the brier, and fastened it in her hair with loving tenderness.

They lived together for two short years, their cup of happiness full to the brim; united not only in body, but in spirit. But darkness came suddenly and swiftly, for he died. And then indeed it seemed as if the sun of her earthly day had set—had sunk down beyond the horizon to rise not again, and for awhile the earth which had before been full of joy, seemed to contain nothing but darkness and despair. But a light *came*, even the glorious light of Christ's loving comfort and aid—One who had promised "not to afflict beyond that we are able to bear."

Look at her now, as she stands there! her eyes bent on the treasure in her hands, yet her

thoughts far away, even in the land of glorified spirits, holding sweet communion with him who has gone before, longing with a soul's intense yearning for the blessed reunion in heaven, where—as Christ's own blessed promise testifies—there shall be no more parting, but one eternity of love and peace. And ever and anon come over her memory the words of one of old, who when suffering bereavement said, "And now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me." And a link deathless in its power and all glorious in its beauty drew the chastened spirit from a land where the serpent's poisonous trail is always visible, to one where love and youth are fragrant, pure, and sinless, through the portals of which death cannot enter.

Only a few letters written in a plain schoolboy hand! the words traced with care, affectionate and boyish in their terms; but a mother built her proudest hopes upon them, until in the still solemn hours of night the pale horse and its rider came for her one treasure. Oh, how she tried to hold him back, until she felt her powerlessness to aid, as the shadow of

death brooded over, and then settled on the wasted cheek and lustreless eye of her boy. How she pleaded for his life, urging her plea with overflowing heart and tear-dimmed eyes, until the lifeless hand lay cold and still in the hand of death. Then another link was added to the chain that bound *her* desolate weary spirit to its home.

Ah, hundreds of trial-worn hearts are nearer heaven to-day because of these links! A mother had lost her babe, and being pressed to do something unholy and sinful, she said, "How can I do it, with a child of mine in heaven?" Who can tell the safeguards these links are, in their blessed, sinless purity, binding us with strong, yet invisible cords to the better land; leading us, step by step, in the path that ends in the "many mansions?" What matters it if our hearts are sore with our earthly loss, and the footsteps of the angel of death are still sounding in our ears, if far above all we hear the sweet cadence of the heaven-learnt notes of our beloved, and the thrilling rapture of those who having come out of great tribulation, "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

FOUND DROWNED.

IT was a face out of which all life and light had faded: a wan, white face, with many a wrinkle and furrow; a listless, weary expression upon it, and a painful languor in the pitiful blue eyes. Poor Magdalene! thy path has been no joyously happy one. Ah, there is a little life left in her yet! Did you see how the resentful fire glimmered in those faded eyes as yon haughty lady gathered her velvet robes more closely round her, lest the spotless garments of maiden purity should touch the garments now defiled with shame? 'Twas only a little flash, and then it died out, and a weary sigh broke from the white, strained lips; the poor feet are almost too weary to travel farther, and she leans against the walls of that school-house with a numbness in her heart and brain. Only for a short time. See! the lips are quivering and the tears are slowly rolling down the pallid cheeks. She is crouching down to the very ground, and

covering her face with her thin, attenuated hands, while the joyous song of the happy school-children rings merrily through the air.

Poor forsaken Magdalene! The song takes her back to the innocent days of childhood, and her heart yearns over the past, busily gleaning the endearing words spoken by a mother's loving lips: oh, how she loathes the sin that separates her from purity and love: who could loathe it more than she? She sees again in imagination her pretty country home; the stile by which she listened to the seducer's tale in the quiet gloaming, the few fleeting months of restless happiness, then the sickening, loathsome horror of the following years: how she shudders even as she recalls them!

Can she, the now polluted, sinful Magdalene, have been that happy, gleeful child who danced the joyous days away, then nightly, tucked in her snowy crib, listened to a mother's soft lullaby and prayers? Can this degraded being be one and the same as the little birdie who once made the home nest so full of innocent pleasure, and daily heard such songs of praise as the ones to which she had just been listening?

Then there dawns feebly upon her the remembrance of creeping quietly in the darkness

of night to lay her head on the cold turf under which a broken-hearted mother was taking her long rest; of stealing behind in the shadow to see a funeral procession taking a strong man stricken to the village churchyard, and hearing the neighbours say, "Ah, she brought his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

All this and much more floated before her, while the weak form shook with anguish, and the passers-by said she was in a state of maudlin drunkenness: young girls and matrons shunned her with virtuous indignation, perhaps one here and there wondering what sort of a *past* that woman had known, yet none went to her aid or rescue, but, like the Levite, they "passed by on the other side." Little did they dream that under those tattered garments a heart still throbbed which a woman's love and pity might have saved! They passed her, *some* perhaps earnest though doubtful Christians, blindly groping for something to do, and neglecting the work laid ready for their hands.

A form rigid and stiff, the eyes staring open glazed in death, the brow pallid, the hands firmly clenched, as if they had grasped for aid in vain, the lips drawn and pinched, the hair hanging loose and wet over the thin

shoulders. Coarse and unloving eyes gazed upon this wreck of humanity, whilst "found drowned" passed from mouth to mouth. Yes! *found drowned;* and a sister woman's hand might have stayed the deed.

A LIFE PICTURE.

A WOMAN sits alone; a woman with a sad, quiet, pitiful face, young in its outline and roundness, old in its traces of pain and sorrow; large, dark, grey eyes, from which the tears are slowly falling on the garment which she sews; and as she drearily stitches away, she thinks of that beautiful far-off land, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Ah, that is the place she wants to reach; and to-night her memory is roving over long-forgotten scenes; childhood's happy days and dreams, when the long vista of years stretched before her like a sunny, azure sky, cloudless and beautiful; when she, the only and petted child of indulgent parents, laughed and carolled in innocent glee, with no foreshadowing of the bitter curse that would blight and embitter her whole life, robbing her of all that woman holds priceless and dear.

Mrs. Grey's early life had been spent in a

happy home, where peace, purity, and cheerfulness always found a dwelling-place, and no rough wind had touched her, until years after she had given her hand to the one who won her trusting girlish heart; then the shadow crept in, gradually growing denser and darker, until she struggled helplessly against the fearful gloom which enshrouded her, and mourning, turned from her broken dream of happiness in despair. Two years after her marriage, a little son came to gladden the hearts of its parents, and their cup of happiness seemed full to overflowing. Now her little one is laid in the quiet grave, the blue eyes and dimpled limbs at rest till the great resurrection, and none know how the mother's heart aches and yearns for the clinging little arms and the pattering of tiny feet; none witness the bitter tears wrung from her inmost soul, as she looks with loving eyes and brooding pain at the little half-worn frocks, shoes, and toys laid by in the drawer, which no eye but hers ever beholds. Time was when another heart shared her burden, and a manly love and tenderness had aided in soothing her grief; but now she was alone—alone to bear it all. Where was he? Wait in that desolate room, and you shall know.

Hour after hour drags wearily away, and the quiet watcher pulls together the few dying embers, reflecting with a sigh that there is no more fuel in the house; and her fingers cannot accomplish so much of the unending stitching, when they are numb and blue with the cold. But the time of keen anguish and pain is past with her now, and she only wonders with a vague sense of unrest how long this state of things will last: hope is almost banished from her heart, and despair sits like a dread sentinel upon her hearthstone. Oh, what has wrought this fearful desolation? Surely some fiend incarnate must have stepped over that threshold to work such utter devastation and ruin. She looks drearily round the room, and gazes vacantly with her mournful eyes at its contents—a broken table, two chairs, a stool, and a bedstead over which is spread a patchwork counterpane, which her own deft fingers had sewn to cover the worn things beneath; and this is all that remains of her once prettily decorated and well furnished home. One by one she had parted with each article of furniture to keep the wolf from the threshold; but now all her efforts seemed in vain, for day by day she grows weaker, and her hand

now refuses to accomplish the work that must be done to prevent starvation and death entering the door. Hark! the sound of a footstep falls on her ear; not the one she used to love—light, springing, and buoyant,—but an unsteady, slouching, straggling step, proclaiming the drunkard's return. He enters, and with a harsh, discordant laugh asks for "brandy." The woman's face does not even change its expression! No, for it is, alas! an oft-repeated request, and the disfigured, debauched, and wretched man reels on to the bed, and sleeps the inebriate's sleep. Ask her how he fell. I will tell you her story as I heard it from her own lips.

"When I married Harry, he was so handsome and kind—ah, you need not look at him now, and think it impossible; that isn't my Harry lying there, but the *thing* into which drink has transfigured him—I thought I could never know greater happiness. He had a deep, rich, tenor voice, and night after night we sang together, or took walks in the quiet country lanes, until I fancied that nothing but death could ever spoil our treasured happiness and home. Then when Baby came, Harry was so proud of him that he said he

must try and get a situation in the town, that our boy might be educated well. I willingly acceded, fondly thinking that our happiness was now even more firmly secured than before, and twelve months after, we came here. At first we lived in that pretty house in S—— street, with every comfort gathered round us; but when we had been there a few months, Harry commenced staying out late at night; first making office work his excuse, and then the society of friends; but when I asked him to bring them home and spend the evening here, he laughed at what he termed my silly notions, saying, 'A man couldn't always be tied to a woman's apron-string, even if she were his wife.' Time passed on, and then night after night he came in flushed and excited with wine. I pleaded, coaxed, and remonstrated with him, but he turned a deaf ear to all my entreaties. Of course, our income could not stand the continual drain, and week after week he gave me less for household expenses, till, to keep my baby alive, I parted with several articles of furniture to buy food. When he found what I had done, he, for the first time, swore an awful oath, declaring that he had given a bill of sale on everything in the house.

A week after, his employer gave him notice, and shortly he was turned adrift. At the same time our baby was ill, and the doctor said nothing but nourishing things could keep him alive. I sold my watch and wedding-ring—my other jewellery had gone before—but the money was spent all too soon, and my baby, my darling, daily wasted, until his little blue eyes closed in death, and I thanked God that his sufferings were ended. While he was lying in his little coffin, the man holding the bill, hearing that Harry was out of employment, came and took our furniture, compassionately leaving us the bedstead, chairs, and table. I would not give my child a pauper's burial, and my husband dared me to ask my relations for help, so I sold enough of my wardrobe to bury my darling. Then we lived, or rather almost starved for nearly a year, Harry drinking and repenting, until I lost all faith in him. Nearly a year dragged on, and then we received a letter from our family solicitor, stating that my father was dead. He had died suddenly—was well in the morning, and sleeping his last sleep at night. We went home, and when we came into possession of my father's well-stocked farm, Harry again renewed his vows, and for a time all went well, until

the fear of his again falling became more dim and indistinct. One day, when he returned from market, I went to the end of the lane as usual to meet him, and he came staggering along, almost grovelling in the dust. I turned and fled into the house, and God help all those who endure what I endured that night! I think my sun of earthly hope set then, for that sight blackened my whole life. It was the beginning of the old wretched life, only, if possible, a wretchedness increased tenfold, and a degradation deeper and more intense. I took these things with me (pointing to the furniture) when we went home, and when everything else on the farm was sold, I saved these as relics of a happier time. Drink has done it all! Drink has killed my baby, ruined—oh, how irretrievably! —its father, and wrecked my whole life. Do you wonder I don't weep? Ah, God grant you may never live to know that dull aching and anguish which tears will not relieve!"

And she turned with a convulsive shudder, and gazed with a gleam of the old tenderness on him who so ruthlessly had dispelled her life's happiness.

Six months after I saw a pauper's funeral leaving the house, and heard the neighbours

saying, as they gathered round the door, "A good thing for her, poor thing; she has known real hard times of it!"

I saw a man leaning against the window, with white face and sunken eyes, and as I looked upon him, I said, "Whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him."

ENGLAND'S WORKING WOMEN.

A WHIM very generally obtains credence in the present day, by which nearly all women earning the daily necessaries of life by the labour of their brains or hands, are looked upon with a degree of contempt by those who think themselves more highly favoured. A girl who trifles away her mornings at home, doing some intricate, useless fancy-work—too often destined never to be finished—while her tired, over-tasked mother superintends the preparations for dinner, and attends to all household comforts; who grandly orders the fagged little drudge of a servant to find and fetch the gloves mislaid by herself, and then strolls out on the fashionable esplanade to talk vapid, sentimental nonsense with some exquisitely-dressed dandy; who dotes on languishing songs, and weeps over the trials and sorrows of some fictitious

heroine, but turns sick at the thought of honest toil;—she receives the world's approbation, and takes a far higher position in the social scale than the girl who, knowing that her father has toiled for his home and children until his over-tasked brain and hands refuse to do any longer the amount of labour necessary to keep them in honest independence, goes out bravely into the world, and taking her place amongst the workers, determines to lighten their load.

Behind many a counter there stand women who yearn for home work and home ties, yet resolutely stifle that yearning for the sake of those dear to them; and we think, ay, and are sure, that at the last day, stamped with the Divine patent of heaven's nobility, they shall stand higher than their fellow-creatures who now slightingly pass them by. Do they think it a small matter for a girl to leave a happy home, and, mingling with strangers day after day, take her place behind a counter from morning until night, waiting on fastidious customers, who inspect goods often merely to relieve the tediousness of the day, because nothing of more importance claims their time or attention? Is it nothing that they are obliged perhaps to submit to the rudeness

and incivility of the tradesman's haughty, purse-proud wife, who forgets that a true lady is always courteous and civil, even to her inferiors? Is it a trivial thing that she is often far away from all she holds dear, and hears the world speak slightingly of herself and her fellow-assistants?

We do not attempt to deny that amongst the shop-assistants of the present day there are giddy, senseless, heartless girls; but in all grades of society the same levity and lightness will be found to a certain degree. Is it therefore just and charitable for the sake of a few to cast blame upon the many? The time will come when the work of a woman's hands shall honour her.

Then, again, how often we hear the words, "only a governess," spoken in tones of contempt. And who shall tell the agony of heart patiently endured by girls who, delicately nurtured and highly educated, are obliged through sad reverses to seek a livelihood by turning their education to account, often receiving for invaluable services a paltry pittance, barely sufficient to keep body and soul together? But, by the world, these girls are not honoured for their struggle after independence, or pitied for

their misfortunes. Shall it always be so? Must talent and worth be hunted away from the refined social circle, to make way for money? Shall not England's workers become her nobles, and her approving laurels be given to the *worthiest*, not the wealthiest? How many would prefer the seclusion of home and its joys to the rude, unequal strife with a pitiless world, but that they know their work is their bread; so, repressing all longings, and looking to their Heavenly Master for strength, they go resolutely forward until the strife is ended, and then receive the blessed commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and enter into the joy of their Lord.

Not only do the working women lose comfort and happiness by the present state of affairs, but their influence is in a great measure lost, and society itself suffers. Where do we get our Sunday-school teachers, District and Sick visitors, our Tract distributors? Do they come mainly from luxurious homes? Is the greater part of the work done by our fashionable young ladies? Do they not rally strongly from the shops of our towns? with a kindly word of sympathy and warning carrying out the Divine injunction, "Rejoicing with them that do rejoice,

and weeping with them that weep;" soothing the sufferings of the sick, with a woman's gentle hand and ready tact; smoothing the weary one's pillow, and lulling him to rest; gladdening and lighting the path of the dying through the dark valley with God's holy promises, until they become the sunshine of the habitations of the poor. As Sunday-school teachers they are entitled to our respect and esteem. Who but girls with their hearts rightly influenced would, after the labour and confinement of the week, devote their Sabbath, their day of rest, to the training and instruction of unruly children? Let each worker be welcomed in society on her own merits and abilities.

One word to the workers. Work on bravely and staunchly, doing your duty fearlessly towards God and man; mayhap a brilliant future is in store for you, and instead of being despised by society you shall be counted one of its brightest and loveliest ornaments. We believe the day is not far distant when the works of those who toil with earnest will and pure motive shall praise them "in the gates," and the world shall yield them the respect and honour which are their right, and then they will reap from their fellow-creatures the golden opinions which they have

won by their worth and work. But even if you are not amongst those whose deeds are acknowledged by the world, you will meet with many encouragements in your labours, and rejoice in the happiness of a quiet conscience. And in the bright hereafter, when great and small shall stand at the last tribunal of justice, what comparison will there be in the toils and self-denials through which you have passed, to the great and holy joy which you will experience when redeemed souls shall testify that *you* had been the instrument of bringing them back to God, and—though sometimes unconsciously—had by your zeal and patience stimulated others to join in God's glorious cause? And above all, to *you* will be said those glorious and cheering words,—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Then will arise from thousands and tens of thousands of glorified spirits the jubilant song:—

"The Lord, He is God! praise Him,
And let His name be magnified
For ever and ever!"

ANGELS IN DISGUISE.

I WONDER how it is that in every household there is a nondescript member, with no beauty, no talent, being only the help of the family.

I have known several of these, who may justly be termed "Everybody's girls," and I want to give an insight into the character of one of them.

A pretty drawing-room with its family group shall be my first introduction.

Lily, the musician of the family, is rejoicing in the attention of most of its members while she performs with great taste one of Beethoven's Sonatas. Edith is the painter, and all the glowing pictures adorning the walls are proudly pointed out to the admiring beholders as being "Edith's work;" she is also the beauty, nature having endowed her with a pretty oval face and a profusion of sunny ringlets.

But sitting in an obscure corner is "Everybody's girl," by name Gertrude, or, as she is more familiarly styled, Gerty, a maiden with no pretensions to beauty, and no aptitude for accomplishments. Her eyes are soft and womanly, though the face is anything but an artist's ideal, yet she occupies no unimportant place in the household. It is she who makes the cake that causes the exultant "Hurrah" from Harry and Tom at school, as they exhibit its wonderful dimensions and properties to a crowd of admiring schoolfellows. It is *she* who receives their boyish effusions, and learns how Tom planned playing Harry a "stunning" practical joke, and how Harry prematurely discovered it, and gave him a Roland for an Oliver. *She* hears of the "jolly larks" and defiance of rules, so delightful to mischievous youngsters who are drilling for the battle-field of life. *She* gives the sisterly word of counsel and caution, and becomes the safeguard of their moral manhood by her kind and thoughtful admonitions. It is *her* loving hands that nightly tuck the little ones in their tiny cribs, teaching the pure rosebud lips to lisp "Our Father;" and then she tells them stories hallowed by the name of Jesus and the wonderful pathos of the Cross; or else leads them

through the fields of Bible history, watching their blue eyes fill with tears as she pictures to their vivid imaginations the selling of little Joseph by his cruel brothers, or the untold friendship of David and Jonathan, and its sad ending.

It is *she* who weaves fascinating stories of fairies, and still more beautiful ones of dutiful children: until the little ones love her as they love the light, even as an essential to their happiness and comfort.

It was "Everybody's girl" who found her father's slippers, and balanced his wearisome accounts, while, in a loving, daughterly way, she soothed his weariness by her gentle care and affection; and when the fearful epidemic raged, and one after another of the family lay smitten with the fell disease, it was *she* who hushed the murmurs of the sufferer, moistening the parched lips, brushing the hair from the damp brow with true womanly tenderness; and when Death stole the mother's last blossom, putting his ghastly fingers upon the rosebud lips, it was "Everybody's girl" who decked the little limbs for their last resting-place, hiding her grief for fear "mother" should guess the sad secret; and when consciousness returned and life again coursed in its freeness through that mother's

veins, it was *she* who broke the dire news of bereavement, by her love robbing it of half its sting.

She was the confidante of her sister's love-stories, though the one who had won Lily's affections had once been a suitor of her own. Gerty's father said that in one short month she had merged from a child into a woman. Ah, she had; and the secret of it was told by a tiny bunch of white spring violets hidden away in the corner of a drawer, a posy that might in itself have been an index to her life, crushed and faded, but, thank God, with some of the sweetness still left in it!

Did she sigh and mourn over those withered tokens of a faithless love? Did she moan and wail over lost hopes and faded dreams? God only knows; for outwardly she made no sign, except by taking up the burden of her life which could well have been set to the pathetic refrain, "It might have been," and steadily following out the duties given her. No one in the household guessed her story, or knew the passionate yearnings lurking beneath the calm exterior; no one knew how the poor heart was dying for sympathy, and how she longed to confide in one true friend. Oh, no! she was "Everybody's girl," but belonging specially to no one.

Years passed on; then, one bright spring day, the blinds of her home were down, the rooms darkened, and childish voices in broken and hushed tones asked for Gerty, but "she was not, for God had taken her" to bask in the light of one love and *one* Saviour. Then "Everybody's girl" was missed. Weary feet went restlessly about the house petitioning in vain for the old sweet stories. The father went no longer to his study to ask for the opinion of Gerty, but with a dull aching at his heart would try to picture the one whom he never half valued in life; while the mother in broken accents continually exclaimed, "Ah, who can replace my lost one?"

A REMINISCENCE.

OH, days of the past! fraught with pain, yet hallowed by sacred joys, and vague aspirations after the great and sublime; oh, memory of the days of yore! help me to pay a passing tribute to one of the truest poets who ever charmed us with songs of sympathy, and who with a master hand touched the chords of the human heart, rousing the deadened faculties with strains of martial music, to sterner efforts and more enduring toil.

Oh, Longfellow! for the sublimity of thy thought, the purity of thy sentiment, and thy power to stir all the holy impulses of our nature, thou art enshrined in the deepest corner of my heart!—not for adoration or for worship, but for heartfelt gratitude to a bountiful giver, who in the depth of my pain and sorrow sent thy "Psalm of Life;" rousing me from my dull apathy and utter listlessness, by its stirring words and call to duty. Through all my life I

will never cease to regard thee with a love and tenderness untold. Ever shall I remember the thrill that moved my whole being, and the uplifting of my heart, when I first read those stirring lines! I had been thinking over my sorrows, and in some sort of way had a dull, incomprehensible pity for myself, as if I were some other girl who pined for love and sympathy and could not gain it. And I sat with my head in my hands, a burning pain throbbing through my aching temples; but, alas! bodily pain was far surpassed by *mental* suffering. Sitting thus, a thought came into my mind that a friend had asked me to read "Evelyn's Story; or, Labour and Wait," defying me to read it without shedding tears. I took up the book and glanced inside, believing that no trouble of an imaginary heroine could move while so much trouble of my own hovered over me. What cared I to live? Had I dared, I would have wildly defied God and ended my life. As it was, I chafed and rebelled, daring Him in sullen darkness and despair to do His worst.

So feeling, I read—

> "Let us then be up and doing,
> With a heart for any fate;
> Still achieving, still pursuing,
> Learn to labour and to wait."

Long I brooded over the lines. "With a heart for any fate." I thought that no fate could be worse than mine; surrounded by professed friends and acquaintances, yet lonely as the pelican in the wilderness; my heart vainly trying to anchor on one true friend, and then proving that no anchorage could be found. Only the previous Sunday I had listened to the worshippers in God's house chanting these words: "Lover and friends hast Thou removed far from me, and mine acquaintance hast Thou hid from mine eyes;" followed by "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and I cursed God in my heart instead of glorifying Him, saying in my wayward rebelliousness, that only hypocrites could sing these words after the previous lamentation.

Now it seemed to come with a fresh light, as if the failures of the past were, and ought to be, only incentives to more vigorous and strenuous efforts to pursue and achieve. There and then the ice was broken, and I knelt and prayed, confessing my sinfulness, and pleading for aid as I had never pleaded before; and at last it came, the "Help from the hills," and with chastened spirit I arose, determined to try to "labour and to wait."

To the authoress who introduced to my notice the beauties of Longfellow I ever offer a tribute of gratitude and regard. It is years now since I read her book, but vivid as the events of yesterday are the thoughts born of it. How could I read that tale, with its world of pathos, its heart-struggles and victories, and not know that it was written by a woman who had suffered and triumphed, pursued and achieved; who had passed through the thickest of the fight, and, though scarred by the battle, had been strengthened, purified, and blest? And I exclaimed again and again with bitter tears as I read it, "So also will *I* conquer, God helping me!" I followed the tenor of the story, learning its lesson of submission and patience, and cried from the depth of my heart: "Help me also to bow to Thy will, O my Father!"

Then came peace. Oh, there is no way so fraught with life, comfort, and hope, as the way of submission, because, be our life ever so dreary, and our lot outwardly rough, and driven with the storm, He can whisper to it peaceful, hallowed words, driving away the floods of pain that would otherwise engulf our weary panting hearts. When He gives quietude, who can disturb it?

So hearts that are fainting
Grow full to o'erflowing,
And they that behold it
Marvel, and know not
That God at their fountains
Far off has been raining,
The dawn is not distant,
Nor is the night starless :
  Love is eternal ;
  God is still God,
And His faith shall not fail us :
  Christ is eternal.

So to the true Christian, who is constant in working and believing, no earthly night of sorrow can be starless, because the bright, heavenly lustre of faith, hope, and unwavering trust shines out as a beacon, guiding on to far happier times, to fairer, higher, and nobler joys, until the soul leaves its grovelling for creature happiness, and soars away after the infinite and unending pleasure of a spiritual life.

Nobler, grander aspirations are born of intense suffering than of anything else in the world; for God often perfects His children through suffering. Had there been no dark night of sorrow in the souls of the Bards, could they have had the power to touch the human heart as they do with their tender sympathy ?

Had Bunyan not suffered so many years of imprisonment in Bedford gaol, we should have lost that glorious book for Pilgrims to the heavenly city; and, farther back still, had John the Divine not suffered lonely exile in the Isle of Patmos, from whence would have come the mystic Revelations to kindle the intense longing for the city where "all tears are to be wiped away?" Ah, Bunyan might have complained, John might have murmured, but, as if graven on tables of stone, the truth stands out that it was in love and pity for the *many* that God called *them* to suffer. So in our fierce trouble, when we cry, "Stay Thy hand!" "All Thy billows have gone over me!" perchance God is elevating and beautifying our characters, that they may make plain to others the way made perfect. Methinks that when in our songs of praise, we join those who have gone before, higher than all the rest shall be heard the song of those who have come out of great tribulation and suffering. Often when we bow and cry out in our pain, we hear the voice of our Saviour saying above all the tempest's roar, "Come here, my child, and nestle close to Me," and "I the Lord thy God will be thy helper."

Have you ever noticed that the closer your friendship with the great and good, the more deeply you imbibe their ideas and partake of their spirit? And so it is that the nearer we get to God, the more we benefit by our sweet communion; and our growing likeness to Him, throws a hallowing influence over our thoughts and actions. Often we pray, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and when God answers our prayer and sends suffering and bereavement to bring us nearer, we are inclined to rebel, forgetting that He, in His all-wise omniscience, sees our want as we can never see it, and thus in His own way brings us nearer and yet nearer to Himself.

OUR NELLIE'S DEATH-BED.

"We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

"Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied;
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died."

HOOD.

I AM not going to tell any elaborate story of a life, with its ever-changing scenes, and varied phases, but the simple story of "our Nellie's death-bed"—just as I think *she* would like me to tell it, ascribing all power and glory to the Saviour, who sustained and comforted her in the hour of trial. I believe in the ministry and communion of spirits, and so believing, think my darling will be near me while I write this record of her passing away to "her Father's house on high."

She always had an intense fear of death, and even after her conversion, one day said to me: "Polly, dear, do you think it wrong? I cannot conquer my aversion to even the bare thought of death. I strive to think of the home *beyond*, and that it is merely passing through the dark valley to a land of glorious beauty and peace. Do you know sometimes I feel heaven and Christ so near, that there seems but a step between me and them; then death flits before me, and shuddering, I feel I *dare not die*."

But now, Nellie was dying. I sat beside her, her hands closely clasped in mine, vainly trying to keep back the rebellious tears: oh, how I loved her! and yet God was gradually taking my treasure from me. I dared not look into the future without her loving words to cheer and guide me. So I sat, in my heart murmuring at the dispensation. Nellie's sweet, low voice broke the deathly stillness of the room at last, as she said, as if in answer to my unspoken thoughts,—"He doeth all things well."

Again silence reigned, and I prayed to be resigned. By and by she said: "Polly, darling! I want you to bend low, so that I can tell you something. You know how I dreaded death?

Well, all the fear is gone now; Jesus is here, and I cannot doubt Him; it only seems like being

> 'Borne on angels' wings away
> To realms of everlasting day.'

I had such a beautiful dream last night; I thought I was soaring away through limitless space, when I heard the sound of music—sweeter, richer, and deeper than any earthly instrument could produce. I thought I stopped to listen, entranced, and high above every other note, these words rang out: 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' I was pondering the words in my heart, when again a new song filled the space, a song full of adoration and praise, that seemed to ring through the whole earth, and echo again and again through the sky. I could not tell the theme, but seeing a pearly gate before me, I knocked; then a glorified spirit, in words of sweetest music said: 'It is not given unto thee to know the song, or to feel its glad, mystic power, but soon thou shalt know and join it too.' Then, as if by some strange revelation, I felt it was my beloved mother who spoke to me: stretching out my arms in wild appeal I cried: 'Mother! mother! let me in!' A glorious brightness shone around her, as she

answered: 'Soon! soon, my child!' The intensity of my yearnings awoke me, but the echo of the song remained, and again and again to-day I have heard it. Oh, Polly, my friend, it is worth dying to see Jesus and to join in that sacred song! Thanks be to His holy name, it is all right now."

Then she gave me a message for her school-fellows, and spoke of joining two who had gone before.

The exertion seemed too much for her, and she sank back exhausted; a little while after, her lips moved, and thinking she asked for something, I put my ear to them, and caught the words:—"Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." "In my Father's house are many mansions." "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Then she softly repeated that beautiful hymn:—

"Surrounded by a host of foes,
Stormed by a host of foes within,
Nor swift to flee nor strong to oppose,
Single against hell, earth, and sin,
Single yet undismayed I am—
I dare believe in Jesu's name."

Never shall I forget the deep abiding peace that shone on her wan, white face, as with great emphasis she repeated:—

"Salvation in His name there is,
Salvation from sin, death, and hell,
Salvation into glorious bliss,
How great salvation—*who* can tell?
But all He hath for mine I claim—
I dare believe in Jesu's name."

"Polly, darling, kneel down and thank Him for me; He *has* crowned my life with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

With throbbing heart I knelt down and tried to pray, but words failed me—I seemed choked with suppressed emotion; then, as if her spirit conquered the weakness and decay of her body, she raised herself up and prayed. We listened with bated breath as she spoke with the Saviour, whose presence we so powerfully felt. She prayed: "O our Saviour, our Jesus, by whom we come to God, hear my poor faltering words! Thou knowest how sore this parting is; oh, comfort my dear father, and lead him in the way of life everlasting. Dear Jesus! the darkness seems closing around me; I can hardly see the faces of my loved ones; my heart is heavy for their sorrow and pain; put Thy arms around them and comfort them.

O Lord Jesus, this is the *only* bitter thing in death! but the light beyond takes away its sting. Thou hast been good to me all the way through, and guided my feet when they have faltered most; I pray Thee, O God, to guide the feet of my friends in the way of peace; Thou who didst love us so much as to give Thine only Son, be with them when I am come to Thee! The shadows are becoming deeper, the darkness more dense, but *Thy* smile is upon me, and I do not fear." Here her voice quivered; then, summoning all her strength, she cried: "He giveth me the victory! Sing! oh, do sing!" And with bleeding hearts, we sang "Rock of ages, cleft for me," her voice sending up its triumphant praise, as if the spirit rejoiced in the thought of its speedy release. Higher and higher her voice arose, as if an angel's song had been taught her; we listened while she sang the last verse over again, as if exultant with rapture; then, clasping her hands, she said: "Oh, how could I doubt my Saviour? If this is dying, I would die for ever; my soul is *full*, *full*, oh, so full of Jesus! my heart will break with its weight of joy. Sing 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;' do sing me out of this world into

heaven." And we sang, ay, and with full hearts, literally bearing her on the voice of song through the dark valley. As we finished, she said: "Place the light so that I can see you, dear papa, for it is getting dark; and then kiss me." He did as she desired, and then, as I stooped down to kiss her, she stroked my head with her feeble hand, and whispered: "Meet me up there, won't you, darling?" Then, raising her hands, she cried: "I am coming! I am coming!" and so yielded her spirit again to God.

I might have told you how this dear friend of mine lived; how she endeared herself to all in her zeal for Christ, guiding her Sunday-school children to the Saviour, visiting the sick, and endeavouring, with all her might, to follow in her Master's footsteps; but I think she would rather I told how her Saviour removed the sting of death, and helped her to conquer the terrors of the grave, because that was the *one thing* she dreaded and feared.

Timid Christian, are *you* shrinking from the thought of crossing the dark stream, and breasting the waves of death? Is it to you a continual dread? If so, at once leave your dread and shrinking with Jesus, feeling that "as thy

day thy strength shall be." Do you think Jesus will lead you all over the thorns and briers of life, through its billows of affliction and bereavement, its lonely heart-achings, its undefined yearnings and unsatisfied longings, and then forsake you at last? Give to the winds thy fears! "He is faithful who has promised," and if you cling trustingly to Him, he will present you faultless, through His merit, to the Father, that at the last day you may be added to the jewels in His crown, and swell the song of praise in which none but the redeemed can join.

THE GLORY OF DECAY.

"THE glory of decay." Witness it in the decay of nature. Walk forth on some bright autumnal afternoon into the country, and look on the landscape, and see the trees, with their rich tints of red and brown, and the falling leaves, the sun shedding its glorious radiance over them, tinging with a soft gold their already beautiful hues. Watch till your heart is constrained to praise the Creator, and you will exclaim: "Even in the decay of nature there is glory!"

Watch that infant over whom its mother is anxiously bending, waiting to catch its last breath, feeling that she can even be thankful that God is taking it from this world; for she knows that now no careworn lines will ever be drawn on that sweet face, no shame be written on that fair brow, no spot of sin ever sully that pure soul. As it draws its last breath, there settles on its face a sweet smile, as if it were

already in its Saviour's bosom; and as the tearful mother gazes her last upon it, she feels that there is both beauty and glory in decay.

Look at that fair young girl, as she lies on her couch of languishing and pain, with her white brow and flushed cheek, a victim of consumption. There is not a fairer picture to be seen. She has relinquished all her bright hopes for this world, just as life was bursting in beauty upon her. The struggle was hard and long, but the victory is won, and now no unfulfilled hopes of the future can disturb the calm and holy joy she feels as she lies there, waiting for her Saviour's call, slowly fading away from our view. Our hearts are strangely melted within us as her clear voice tells of the home to which she is going, of the peaceful resting-place she will find in the Saviour's arms; and a voice whispers in our hearts, "There is glory in decay."

See that youth, stricken by the hand of death in a foreign clime, away from home and friends, and all that he holds dear. No kindly hand to wipe the death-dew from his clammy brow; no mother to kiss his cold lips, and help him in the dark hour of death; no sister to clasp his icy hands upon his breast, and shed over him the mourner's tear! No, he is alone, with no

friendly hand to help him. Yet, as he passes away from earth, there is stamped on his features a glory that never rested there in life, a glory telling that the Sun of Righteousness has shed his rays over the dying bed. And even the stranger who looks on "him that is dead," feels "there is glory in decay."

Tread softly—a mother is dying. Earth is very bright to her, and as she takes the last gaze at her little ones there is a look of agony on her face, and her heart cries out, "How can I leave them?" But the promises of her Saviour come as refreshing waters to her soul, and she feels she can leave them in His hands, and sweetly submits to His will. Then she parts with her husband, the one to whom she has given her best earthly love, and calmly waits the call to that better land. And as her spirit passes away to its heavenly home, her husband bows to the will of God, and exclaims: "Even so, Father: for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." And he, too, feels that "there is glory in decay."

Come with me, and watch that strong man die: he feels his pulse, and knows that soon it shall beat no more; that other hands than his shall wield authority where he has been wont to reign. He will be sought in vain

in the counting-house, and on the Exchange, and notwithstanding he knows that there are those dependent on him whom he loves more than life; that his wife and children will feel sorrow which his strong arm would have kept far from them; that the time is not far distant when his sightless eyes shall be closed, and his tongue can no more speak the thoughts of his heart; that soon the bell will toll for him, and he will be carried to his last resting-place, to return no more for ever; yet he casts his care upon the Lord, Who has promised to be a husband to the widow and a father to the fatherless, feeling that He will fulfil His promise. And from the depths of his heart he cries: "I will praise Thee, O Lord, for Thy manifold mercies to me!" and then resigns his soul into the hands of his Maker, while traces of glory are upon his face and brow.

See the aged Christian warrior, drawing near to the confines of the eternal world; with his feet touching the cold stream of death, he looks upon his past life, and reviews the mercy with which God has crowned it. He has been in the heat of the battle, and at times sorely discouraged by the assaults of the enemy, but he has never been forsaken. No fear of death

troubles his soul, and as he stands on the bank he tells to all around the goodness of his loving Redeemer, and beseeches them to meet him on the other side of the river, and join with him in singing the praise of the Saviour; and then, with a look of heaven-born glory, he passes away triumphant, exclaiming: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And those around feel awed by the strange mysterious glory that fills the place.

But would there be any glory in decay, if we had no bright future to look forward to?—no spring after the autumn; no new life in Christ after death; no meeting after the parting; no clasping hand to grasp us on the other side; no Christ; no heaven? Oh, if this were the case, what sorrow in decay! what woe and anguish, instead of glory! what fearful pain and darkness, instead of joy and light! Surely, Christ sheds His glory on decay; for by Him we look for new life; we know that after death there will be joyful re-unions, joyful clasping of hands and hearts; where there will be no more pain, no more parting; *and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and remove all sorrow from our hearts.*

DOWN HERE AND UP THERE.

"DOWN here," broken toys, little worn frocks, and the listening in vain for the patter of tiny, tripping feet; straining the ear to catch the warbling of the little voice, now silent in the chill embrace of death. The daily visit to the little mound, to cover it with snowdrops, with which she used to fill her tiny little hands last spring; the weeping, and the void left in the home when the bud withered, and the bright nestling left the earthly home to soar away where sin will never defile her pure soul.

"Up there," a little child-angel, grasping the palm, and playing sweet, unearthly music on the harp within its hand. Wipe away your tears for a moment, and listen to its song. Do you catch the strain? Why, you never dreamt that your child could ever sing with such thrilling sweetness. Her clear voice floats on and away, helping to fill the courts of heaven with its

pure, triumphant tone. Who taught her that wondrous song? Ah, thou mother! thy child's voice may well ring out so full and clear, for the song she is singing is one that is learnt only in the mansion above, where those little feet will never grow tired, and the sweet blue eyes never fill with tears. Down here you have the loss; but up there your child has the gain, and is waiting for you.

"Down here," parents pass away from us, and we retain only the remembrance of their loving precepts. We have no fond, faithful, and true counsellor now; how we miss the love and advice lavished upon us! We stretch out our hands in vain for help, and mourn and wail over our loss with countless sighs and tears, even questioning God's providence, and refusing to see the light shining through the clouds. Knowest thou not that thy separation is but short; that the longest life spent is as a tale that is told? What! will not that reconcile you to it? Then I will try and help you to strain your vision to the land that lies beyond, and give you a glimpse of your father and mother in that happy, undefiled state.

Do you remember their faces where once the

furrows lay thick and deep, upon which sorrow had written a long, pitiful tale before the grave closed over them? Now they beam with happiness; and the lines of care, where are they? The furrows where the tears ran down, are they too gone? Ah, yes! their faces shine with the glorious, effulgent radiance only attained inside the pearly gates; and the once trembling hands are sweeping the golden harp, and bringing forth glorious melodies. The bending, drooping forms are not there, but in their place are health, vigour, and freedom from pain. As we gaze upon them a wistful look comes over your face, and you say, "They promised to wait for me on the strand of the golden city." Ah, and they *are* waiting for you, until your life's work is done. How are you doing it? Their eyes, as well as those of God, are upon you, and methinks could heaven's joy be heightened by anything taking place below, it would be by watching the steps of those who are near and dear, and seeing them make noble and strenuous efforts to fight life's battles manfully and well, until they welcome you on heaven's side of the river. Reader, shall the loved ones wait in vain for you?

A sister or a brother has gone from us, and

"down here" there is a vacant chair, and an empty place in our home and heart, which no stranger can fill. We long for the sisterly caress and loving words, and blindly grope for comfort as our tired, way-worn, weary feet tread life's thorny path. We look back with longing, yearning hearts on those we have lost, and feel as if we would give the world for one hour with them again. We miss our brother's strong, willing arm, always ready to shield us from pain and trouble, and think how in his quiet, manly way he used to surmount for us our perplexities and difficulties, till our hearts impetuously swell with emotion and the sense of our loss, and we cry: "I cannot walk this way alone."

"Up there," thy brother or thy sister is waiting. Perchance *now* they are raising a hymn of glorious praise for their deliverance and perfect freedom from earth's cares, and while thy spirit is clothed in sackcloth and sadness, they are hovering around thee, and wafting about thee the purer air of heaven, waiting on and ministering to thee until thy earthly pilgrimage is over, and thy worn, wearied feet tread joyously and untiringly the plains of the New Jerusalem. Ah, they are waiting for thee,

that when thy warfare is accomplished they may rejoice with thee over victory won.

Perhaps you say: "I have not lost any relations, but I mourn for friends who are not, with whom I held communion below. Down here our spirits seemed undivided, and our happiness was incomplete when away from one another. Even our very thoughts were in unison, and as we have talked together, we have been stimulated to grander and more glorious efforts for Christ and His kingdom. Now they are gone, and I cannot hear a song they sang, or catch the intonation of a voice like theirs, but swift as the wind my soul is stirred and thrilled within me, and again I see in my mind's eye the dear, familiar form, and gaze into the love-lit eyes, and, while I muse, my heart's emotion refuses control, and imploringly and with wounded, aching, and impassioned soul, I exclaim: 'Oh, come back to me!' But no answering voice dispels the gloom of my bereavement and pain, and still in desolation and anguish I travel on."

Ah, but there is another side of the picture! "Up there" a fair, pure spirit mingles with the spirits of the just made perfect. Another voice is making heaven's arches ring with the melo-

dious song of the ransomed, and another worn and weary spirit is laving in the bright waters of the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God. Oh, soar higher and yet higher in those fields of light; sink deeper and yet deeper in that water; raise your song of praise fuller and sweeter, bright, happy spirit! And oh, thou mourner, remember that another one is waiting for thee on the other shore; another hand shall be stretched out to grasp thine; another voice shall bid thee welcome. Oh, thou who art wailing in bitterness and anguish for the loss of friends and kindred spirits, lay aside the habiliments of woe; put far from thee the symbols of thy grief; take down thy harp from the willows, and break forth into singing and rejoicing, that thy loved ones are not lost, only gone home before thee; only gone to be at thy Father's house, to give thee a triumphant welcome, and to herald thy approach to the city of thy treasure, and thy God.

PENIEL.

HARK! Hear ye not the echo of the glorious melody, swelling triumphantly through the arches of heaven? Hear ye not the victorious shouts of the glorious company of martyrs, as they tune their harps, and again praise their King for His grace in granting them Peniel below, to lead them above. We muse, and the fire burns, while we feel as if we could join in the heavenly chorus on earth, until all God's people caught the glad refrain, and shouted, "It is Peniel."

Christian traveller, do you not remember the time when in the bondage of sin you cried fervently to God to release you? Do you not remember how you wrestled in prayer till your strength was almost spent, and your spirit broken with anguish, and how you heard the voice of Jesus saying, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest?" And when you came with your burden, the Father ran to meet you,

and as you gazed for the first time upon the comeliness of the Saviour, you exclaimed, "It is Peniel!" Do you not remember the hour of anguish, when you wept because your beloved were taken away—when your hearts were burning with love and holy friendship, and you would fain have journeyed together? But Jesus called them home; and you bowed under His chastening rod. Did He not come to you and speak soothing words, binding your broken heart, and filling it so full of love and God that you exclaimed, "Even here it is Peniel?" Have you never mourned over the unfaithfulness of earthly friends, and with every fibre of your soul torn with pain, bowed before the throne, and from a full and bleeding heart poured out your sorrow to Jesus? till He whispered in your ear, "My child, My love and wisdom ordained this thy lot, and though earthly friends may change and leave thee, I will never leave thee; I, thy God, will never forsake thee. I will be ever near to hold communion with thy spirit, and if thou wilt only look to Me thou shalt yet exultantly say, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and whom do I desire upon earth beside Thee?' And to thy soul it shall be as Peniel."

But some poor Christian is saying: "I have

never seen Peniel; I have no time to wrestle in prayer as I want. Beside, I am obliged to provide for my little ones; and, if I lived in that state, I could not pursue some worldly advantage I am trying to attain. I want to succeed in this first, and then I will serve God more devotedly and zealously." Sayest thou so, O Christian? Know, then, that your God is a jealous God, and if you put worldly advancement before the advancement of His kingdom in your heart, He will say to you, "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." Oh, decide at once to give your heart and will unreservedly into His hands; to trust Him to provide, for He has said that no good thing will be withholden from them that love Him. Give to Him without reservation all your powers of mind and body, and you shall often feel the joys of Peniel.

Another is saying: "I am surrounded by worldly men of business, who would scoff at and mock me if they knew I named the name of Christ, who would laugh in derision if they even dreamt I cared for religion at all. I dare not say to whom I belong, and somehow or other I never have Peniel." No, my brother, nor will you ever have one, either in this life or the one

that is to come, unless you boldly avow your Master; for to you are spoken those awful words, "Of him that is ashamed of Me, I will be ashamed." What matters it if they persecute you for your Saviour's sake? Have you not in view the recompense of the reward? Know you not that so persecuted they the prophets before you? that so in all ages and at all times they have had in derision the saints of the earth? Only avow your discipleship, be true to your colours, and you shall have such a glimpse of Peniel that no earthly persecution will be able to daunt or hinder you in your heavenly career.

No matter what your earthly care or sorrow, your Jesus can give you peace; and it is often at the grave of our brightest hopes that we have the most hallowed experience.

Who cannot call to mind times of danger and bereavement, when Peniel has been hid by blinding tears, and its lustre dimmed by our unbelieving hearts? But Jesus has wiped the tears away, and again we have had it in all its holy glory. Christian, is anything keeping you from having Peniel in your journeying? Oh, give it up at once, for basking in the rays of its radiant fulness you will be able to journey on, singing even amidst the darkest night, because

you have its smile upon you, and you feel that you are leaning upon the arm of your Beloved. Then at last, your journey ended, the battle fought, the victory won, you shall triumphantly enter the gates of the city, and for ever revel in the light of Peniel above. And, methinks, higher and yet higher you will waft your glorious songs of new-born melody, as you think of the Peniel below, leading you through this sin-defiled and polluted world to the one where nought that mars or defiles can enter; and your heart will overflow with its joy, for the Peniel beaming upon you in its effulgent glorious light.

SUNSHINE.

THE blessed, glorious sunshine! How we luxuriate in it, and how it makes our hearts rejoice! Without it our spirits are oppressed with an undefinable depression; we are sad, and know not why; but when the sun dispels the clouds, and bursts forth in all its power and beauty, our spirits again rejoice in its radiance.

So it is with the sunlight of the favour of our God. When we walk in it, our hearts rejoice and are exceeding glad; when it is withdrawn there come sadness, pain, and anguish, and our spirits mourn for the beauty and tranquillity of the past. We cannot always enjoy earth's sunlight; but *heaven's own sunshine, the smile of our Saviour*, might always be ours, did we not cast it away from us. One Christian is mourning in spirit, saying, "Why is it not now with me as in days gone past? Where is the peace and ecstatic bliss I once revelled in? Where

is the purity of thought and clearness of action which characterised my life in days gone by?" Ah, where? Let us look back. Do you remember that first action, to commit which, your conscience told you, would be a sin against God? You stifled that truthful monitor, and with a heightened pulse and beating heart you took the first downward step. How the blush on your cheek told you of your sin! Call to mind the next time that action was committed. Your countenance then betrayed you not. Remember how, when you bowed at your evening communion with the Most High, your prayers remained upon your lips because your heart cried not out after the living God; how you, a weak, sinful, rebellious worm, refused to acknowledge and seek forgiveness for that deed. You lost the sunlight of God, the communion which alone could satisfy your hungry, craving heart; and now in bitterness of soul you are saying, "I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried, mine eyes fail while I wait for God." And you, poor famished wanderer, might have had the sunshine all your journey through!

Another is saying: "I once enjoyed the sunshine of heaven, but now I cannot see it

for my tears; my heart will not say, 'Thy will be done.' My treasures are gone, and as they passed through the dark valley, they told me that God was love, and bade me look to Him. But how can I, when I gaze upon the pallid brow of my darling, and know that the music of my life has been swept rudely away? When I know that I shall never listen to the prattle of my loved ones again,—that I shall yearn in vain for one tender caress or loving kiss now the cold grave must conceal them from my view; when through the vista of coming years I view a drear and unloved life,—how can I see the sun in its glory?" Oh, mourner! wipe your tears away, that you may view again its beauty; for your loved ones are not lost if you yield them to Jesus, and look to Him for support. How can your life be dreary? "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" And if you cry to Him for strength to bear the burden of the cross He has given you, He will not weary of your cry, but with His own promises He will cheer you, and with His own loving hands take away your tears to shine as gems in your heavenly diadem.

Another is basking in the sunlight of earthly prosperity and friendship. As he receives the smiles of the world and its followers, flattered, petted, and caressed, he forgets that here all things change, until a rude blast sweeps away his dream, and, awakening in bitterness of soul, he finds that he has grasped a delusive shadow, when the substance might have been his. Oh, how often we find that the earthly sunlight banishes the heavenly; that when friends are around us and our path is bright, when the future is fraught with glorious anticipations, our fervour and love for Christ decreases. And we should be content always to remain in that state, but that our All-seeing Father calls His wandering children back, taking away the gilded toys with which they have been playing, and gives them the bitter lesson of adversity to learn. Friends they once cherished turn upon them; then in anguish they fly again to the one true sunlight of their life.

But is it not selfish and mean of us, that when our path is bright, our hearts wander from God, even into the paths of forbidden pleasure; that our aspirations are not so high, nor our hearts so near the kingdom? But when

the clouds begin to lower, the wind to blow, and the thunders to roll, we find the impotence of earthly aid, and fly to the Saviour. Well for us that He does not reproach and repulse us for our selfishness, reminding us of our former transgressions, or who could gain His favour? No, He receives us, and when, like the prodigal son, we return to Him, He kills for us the fatted calf, and clothes us in the garments of salvation.

But why do we wander on the dark mountains of sin? Why do we so often have to say, "I will return again to my Father?" Why do we have to mourn over the darkness of our life, when we have only to look up to gaze upon the refulgent beams of the Sun of Righteousness? Is it not because, when we have gained some slight vantage ground, we begin to take our ease, and, instead of seeking strength against the day of temptation, are content to take our rest, leaving our souls open to the assaults of the devil? Oh, let us, day by day, lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us. Ever looking to Jesus, let us hold communion with Him; yielding our spirits into His hands; praying not for our own will, but that ours may be lost in His; striving

with undaunted spirits to gain fresh victory in our great Captain's army; living continually in the sunlight of His smile, until to us shall come the words long waited for, "It is enough; come up hither, and receive thy crown, my child!"

THE APPOINTED WAY TO THE CITY OF GOD.

IS this the way? The carolling of the birds, the laughing of the brook, the rejoicing of the glorious sun, all seem in unison with my bounding heart. My path has been strewn with God's loving-kindness and mercies; my mouth has been continually filled with songs of His love and goodness. He has upheld me in all my goings, thrown around me the mantle of His protecting care, made my heart burn with ecstatic love and joy, and filled my soul full to overflowing with His peace, until it has almost longed to burst its mortal barriers and soar away into the endless light of everlasting day. Oh, how often it has been so, and I have run in the way of the Lord! Truly the lines have fallen in pleasant places. Prosperity is round me; earthly love and friends abound; and on every side rich, rare flowers are springing up to gladden me with their beauty and fragrance. No cloud is on the horizon; no

care is weighing me down, and I am experiencing that the ways of the Lord are the only truly happy ones. Yes, this must be the way.

Is this the way? The clouds are gathering, and the sky is dark and lowering; no bow shines in it. I cannot see one step before me because of my blinding tears. Griefs and sorrows are strewing my pathway, and I cannot stay the anguish of my soul. All is dark and desolate. The sweet blossoms of love and hope are blighted and dying; and in their place are growing briers and thorns that impede my every step. Oh, can this be the way? My cross is heavier than I can bear, and no sorrow is like unto mine! Sayest thou so, O forsaken mourner? Come with me, and I will show thee One, who has borne even more for thee. See that Man of Sorrow. Behold Him wrestling in the garden of Gethsemane. See the gathering sweat of blood upon His holy, sinless brow. Watch Him as He wrestles in that agony of soul; wrung from those pure stainless lips, bursts the bitter anguished cry: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me." Watch Him, as He endures the pitiless taunting of the very men for whom He is bearing that shameful pain and woe. See Him, as with

toiling, painful steps He ascends the hill of Calvary. See the worn, troubled look that woe has stamped upon His countenance. View Him on that cross of suffering. Listen to that startling, thrilling heart-cry, coming from those parched and dying lips, while His heart is breaking beneath the weight of a world's guilt and woe. Let its tones pierce our heart: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then bend to catch the faint expiring accents, "It is finished," and say not there is no sorrow like yours.

Is this the way? Why, from childhood I have had care and toil, suffering and bereavement. Friend after friend with whom I have travelled below, holding sweet communion, has left me alone in the desert. My hopes are flying from me, and I can only lift my hands in despair, and cry: "O God, stay Thine hand: all Thy billows are gone over me." I can hardly keep my head above the swelling flood of anguish that rolls around me; my eyes are hot, and burning with unshed tears; my head is aching and throbbing with the painful thoughts crowding it; my way is hedged in, so that I know not which way to turn, stern duty bidding me pursue one path, and inclination another.

Stay! I feel a Hand put out to save me. I grasp it, and hear a Voice saying, above the roar of the tempest, "Peace: be still!" and, waiting to see the salvation of the Lord, I realise that this is the appointed way.

> "Peace, doubting heart! my God's I am:
> Who formed me man, forbids my fear.
> The Lord hath called me by His name;
> The Lord protects, for ever near;
> His blood for me did once atone,
> And still He loves and guards His own."

Is this the way? Must I go through the dark valley of the shadow of death to reach the celestial city? Must I feel the waters of the narrow stream chilling my body, and bid farewell to all my earthly ties? Must I close my eyes on all I love? Even so; but, leaning upon the arm of my Beloved, more than conqueror I shall prove. For me the victory-wreath shall be twined, and my poor faltering, stammering tongue shall be loosed by the Redeemer's power. There I shall clasp again my loved ones, where parting never comes. No tears shall blind my eyes, nor anguish fill my soul, but in heaven-born rapture I shall tune my golden lyre, and join in the universal song. My eyes shall behold the Lamb in His glory. My once

weary feet shall tread the golden streets of the New Jerusalem; and, feasting on its heavenly joys, revelling in its ambrosial air, I will then pour forth, in one continual rapturous strain, praise and thanksgiving to Him who, by His grace, has led me safely through.

So it is with us all. One goes through the happy, joyous way, with joyful heart and willing feet; another through the toiling, suffering way, with sorrowful heart and downcast eyes; but with both it is the appointed way. God says to some of us, "Do My will;" to others, "Suffer it." He knows just what will fit us for the kingdom, and the company that have gone before. And when He withholds what we imagine is for our good, He is looking on with yearning, wistful eyes; and if we do not follow Him through that trouble, then, one by one, He takes away the things that are chaining us to earth, until we own the chastening rod, and yield our smitten hearts to Him. Then, when we acknowledge His loving preparation of the way, with full hearts we shall sing:—

"My God, the spring of *all* my joys,
The life of my delights;
The glory of my brightest days,
The comfort of my nights."

MARCHING ORDERS.

WORK while it is to-day:
The silent shafts of death
Fall thick to slay,
And stop the warrior's breath.
Be warned in time:
While laurels may be won,
Strive that your light may shine
To earn reward for duty done.
Your leaders fall apace,
Yet be not daunted;
'Gainst evil set your face
While time is granted.
He who inglorious falls,
The grave receives,
Locks in her silent walls,
And no one grieves;
But he who by his life *example* gives
How most to honour God, for ever lives;
His spirit is infused in other minds,
And, after death, new life through them he finds.

His light is not extinguished in the grave,
But lives, a flaming torch, which others wave
Aloft, to cheer and point the way
Through earth's dark vapours, to eternal day.
Close then your ranks, ye Christian warriors fearless,
Nor pause to say the fight is long and cheerless;
The eye of faith can see the sure reward,
For faithful soldiers who keep watch and ward;
Nor for the future only is it given,
But e'en on earth it brings some pledge of heaven.
Who has not felt the glow of honest pride,
When he resolves all dangers to abide,
And at his post to conquer or to die,
Whate'er obstructions in his path may lie:
Even if for *self* he strives, he draws new life,
And rises stronger to renew the strife;
But if for *others* he his efforts gives,
A loftier pleasure in his bosom lives,
More godlike, holier, purer, from the thought
That others have for his protection sought.
But if *for Jesus' sake* he bears the yoke,
Then, only then, he fears no adverse stroke,
For God is with him, all good angels join,
And on his side with all good men combine

To vanquish evil, to preserve our race
From direful sin, and point the way to grace.
Oh, noble thought! if but one word I speak
For Jesus, to a soul all crushed and meek
From sense of sin, that word may ease the pain,
And show the fountain which removes the stain.
What matter if a thousand times I fail,
If *only once* my words can have avail,
To save one sin-wrecked mortal from the doom
Of passing maddened to the silent tomb.
Let us ne'er pause to think of self, but of His cause
Who died to satisfy God's righteous laws,
For short the time to us on earth that's given
To fight for Him, and point the way to heaven.
In truth, the time is short! too short for all,
As each must feel when comes their turn to fall.
Though well-employed each hour of life, in vain
The hope real satisfaction to obtain;
Nought of myself, but through our Saviour's all,
Must be our trust when judgment would appal.
Oh, for the earnest, living, loving trust
Which makes men fearless, when their cause is just;
Which nerved our fathers, for their Saviour's sake,
To brave the hardest forms that death can take!

No half opinions theirs, who, midst the fire,
Held fast their faith, and felt it joy inspire;
No outward forms, nor cold convention led
Them to adopt the faith for which they bled.
The powers of *evil*, then, and *fashion* joined,
With open front against the truth combined;
Now changed their tactics, evil takes the notion
Of making fashion seem to be devotion,
Affording fairly, for the sceptic's sneer,
A mark at which to aim the shaft severe;
While various Christian sections waste their power
In party contest, during life's short hour;
And while for forms contending, fail to close
Their broken ranks against their Master's foes.
'Tis tho' as if in battle, regiments dressed
In different hues, no discipline confessed,
But while the enemy assailed their line,
Spent on themselves the force they should combine
To resist their foes; by mutual wounds they fall,
And point a moral, clearly read by all.
Close then your ranks, ye various Christian Sects,
O'erlook each others', mark your own defects;
Each strive for right, tho' in a different form;
Let all unite to brave the gathering storm.

See, Infidelity with giant strides
Stalks o'er the land, and laughing shakes his
sides;
Boasts he alone, by reason led, can show
A truthful reading of this scene below,
And all the unseen a mythic fable calls,
Which to the dust before proud reason falls.
Not in his *heart* alone, *no God*, he says,
But loud the fool proclaims he knows the ways
In which the wondrous universe arose,
By science guided every mystery knows;
Thus proving true what ancient poets sing,—
"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."
Such foes we fear not; they have nought to give
On which the soul of man can hope to live;
All beauty, hope, and love would sink to dust,
And man become the slave of earthly lust;
In pride of health man may his God deny,
But mark, when *sick*, or when he fears to die,
His soul, in spite of *reason*, turns to heaven,
And cries instinctively to be forgiven.
Let us have faith in God; the time draws nigh
When Jesus comes again as God on high.
He comes to reign! and all His foes shall fly
In vain attempt to shun His radiant eye.
Let all the sections of His Church combine
By *union* to foretaste that glorious time!

Hail each as brother who for truth contends,
And the grand maxims of our Lord defends;
These maxims, practised, would make earth a
heaven—
May will, and power, to practise them be given;
"Love God and man," and "Unto others do
As (places changed) you would be done unto."

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ONCE more for us the feast of love
Is spread, to waft our thoughts above,
And bind us with another link
To friends in heaven, of whom we think;
Who in this sacred place, have shared
Such feast, as is for us prepared
In memory of our dying Lord,
Whose death to us did life afford.

Solemn and sad, yet sweet, the thought
Of Him who our salvation bought;
Solemn, yet sweet, the thought of those
Released from sin and all its woes,
Who, joying in the heavens, proclaim
The glories of their Saviour's name.
Far backward, reaching through the ages,
The line extends through countless stages

Of those, once sinners, saved by grace,
Who now behold their Saviour's face.
And who shall say but, hovering near,
Such angel ministers are here,
And by a silent thought, convey
Love, strength, and hope, as here we pray,
And all unknown with us commune,
And thus our souls to praise attune;
Console and comfort, soothe and cheer,
Dispel our doubts, and banish fear;
Bid us our burdens patient bear,
And to the Cross take every care?
Trusting His word, whose word is life,
We yet shall conquer in the strife;
If in our need to Him we cry,
Who marks us with a brother's eye,
Who of our sins drank up the woe,
And, sinless, bore the avenging blow,—
Who bids us look in faith, and live,
Strong in the grace He longs to give.

Howe'er it be, when here we feel
Links in a chain of well-proved steel,
Extending from our Saviour's time
Through every age and every clime
To us, who have to bear the test
Which proves us fit to join the rest

If tempered in our Saviour's blood,
Poured forth for us in plenteous flood,
Each trial triumphant we shall bear,
And shine untarnished, strong and fair.

We here renew the pledge, to strive
Each generous impulse to revive,
To make our souls of love the seat,
And bid each selfish thought retreat.
This feast we share as kindred true,
With here, at least, one end in view,
To show our faith in Him who came
To live in love and die in shame;
Who kindred life assumed—resigned,
Solely to benefit mankind.

Oh, may His Spirit fill each heart,
As from this sacred place we part!—
Fill us with love to all our race,
And make us meet to see His face!
Weak, sinful slaves of sense are we,
But He can make us strong and free,
And save us in temptation's hour
From the assaults of Satan's power.
We cannot, if we would, retain
Our present mood, half joy, half pain;
The rough vicissitudes of life

May bring us back to care and strife;
But if for justice still we strive,
And in our hearts keep *love* alive;
If truth direct each word we speak,
And mercy give as we would *seek;*
And if with humble hearts we show
Regard for erring friends below,
For us the promise stands secure:
"God's mercies ever shall endure."

FULL SATISFACTION.

NOT satisfied! earth's pleasures pall upon my taste,
I have no light to guide o'er this life's lonely waste;
The darkness gathers round, so densely black,
All sense of rest my weary soul doth lack.

Not satisfied! No praise sincere and sweet,
The hungry, fainting need can fully meet,
Or cast one ray of light upon this sin-sick soul,
As the long dreary years in slow succession roll.

Not satisfied! earth's love is nought to me
While everywhere its faithlessness I see,
That chills the joyous breast at one fell sweep,
And leaves the aching heart in mournfulness to weep.

O Lord, I come, I yield, I cry to Thee;
Where Thou dost dwell, there would Thy servant be;

Take to Thyself, fold to Thy loving breast,
Then shall my weary heart for ever be at rest.

Then, when I've pass'd all bounds of time and
space,
And hear the heavenly chant, and see Thy face,
And in Thy radiant likeness wake and shine,
Then, Lord, shall satisfaction evermore be mine.

PRAYER.

WHEN heavy waves of trouble break and roll,
And ruthlessly assail my weary, burdened soul;
When robbed of health or friends I lowly bend,
What doth to me sweet, hallow'd comfort lend?—
One hour with Thee, O Lord.

What holds me in my darkest, loneliest hour,
When wrestling with my foe, I feel his power;
The power of sin to wound my restless heart,
Writhing beneath the wily tempter's dart?—
One hour with Thee, O Lord.

What nerves my weary, aching limbs anew,
Fresh deeds of love and mercy to pursue;
And bears my spirit from this world away,
To realms of never-ending, blissful day?—
One hour with Thee, O Lord.

Then, when this fleeting, fading life is gone,
When I heaven's pure and spotless garb put on;
And soar away, from earth's foul taint washed free,
O Saviour, grant, I pray, this boon to me,
Eternal love, spent, O my Lord, with Thee!

"I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES."

O LORD, I come to Thee,
Weary, heart-sore, and pain'd;
I hear Thy loving voice,
And feel my rest is gain'd.

I know the weary sigh,
The grief too great for tears,
The anguish'd heart bent low
With woe of passing years.

I know what the soul doth feel
When the loved are torn away,
And we only see before us
The lifeless, soulless clay.

I know how the spirit longs
To join the precious one,
And swell the joyous songs
Of angels round the throne.

I know sin's stinging power
  O'er the weary, laden soul;
How it strikes the way-worn pilgrim
  As he presses to the goal.

But I know a holier thing,
  Pure, sweet relief it gives;
I feel that now my soul can sing
  That my Redeemer lives.

I now defy all woe,
  Earth's darkness, death, and pain;
I lift my cross, and onward go,
  The heavenly life to gain.

And when my home I reach,
  And bathe my weary heart
In the full and flowing fount
  In which I have a part,—

My anthem shall ascend
  Till heaven's high arches ring;
"I know that my Redeemer lives"
  For ever I will sing.

CHANGE.

TO-DAY sweet hopes are rising,
Like flowers rich and rare;
To-morrow they'll be spoken of
Only as things *that were*.

To-day my heart is bounding
With its wealth of love and joy;
Alas! that this world's happiness
Must *ever* know alloy.

To-day, I am surrounded
With loved ones tried and true;
The glorious sun shines brightly,
The sky is clear and blue.

To-morrow clouds will gather,
And with a piteous moan,
My heart will sadly murmur—
Alone! alone! alone!

THOUGHTS UPON THE UNSEEN.

TO pray, is to invoke the Unseen Power
To aid, or to inspire in doubtful hour;
And ne'er in vain does heartfelt wish ascend
To our Creator, Maker, God, and Friend.
We ask for needful power, and power is given;
We feel inspired by guidance sent from Heaven;
But *how* our souls receive the God-sent light
Is not revealed unto our mortal sight.
It may be that the spirits of the dead
Revisit earth, and hover round our head,
Act as a medium, or inspire a thought
Which they had once by past experience bought;
Or message more direct to us convey
To check our haste, or chide us for delay;
Or in a dream, by parable depict
What future dangers shall our life afflict;
Prepare our minds to meet the coming storm,
And thus an unseen guard around us form.

The deathless soul must some fit office find,
And what more fit than to assist mankind?
The thought unbidden, rising in the mind,
May be the speech of souls now unconfined
By earthly forms; and who shall say
We have not power to draw them when we
pray?
For is there not a power by which some minds
Hold converse far apart, when either finds
A kindred thought, of care, or grief, or joy,
At the same instant did each soul employ?
Soul speaks to soul, when they are far apart,
(Unchecked by distance) by some subtle art;
That spirit language death can ne'er destroy,
For such the speech that ransomed souls enjoy.
List, then, the whispering spirit's thought
Which comes to counsel, oft unsought,
But oftener when the soul appeals
From self to Heaven, its light reveals.
If earthly friends turn false, or cold,
These voices say: "Be firm and bold;
Your destined course of duty leads
To sure reward for worthy deeds.
If human hearts, round which you twined
Your best affections, prove unkind,
Shake from your soul the gathering ice,
Which grasps and chills like iron vice;

Keep still the light of love within,
Lest death of death its work begin.
The spirit's death eternal, dread;
Forgive, and pray for them instead,
Nor think there's merit in the deed,
"For daily we forgiveness need."
  The hovering spirit whispers near,
"Seek not for trust unswerving here,
Nor too much disappointment prove,
If hatred is returned for love;
Nor seek your duty to forsake,
Nor reckless course in anger take;
Fight on, and time shall yet disclose
Reward for all these present woes.
If not, like honest soldier fall,
Who gives his life at duty's call."
Our fathers showed in war a constant mind,
Ours must be courage of a different kind,—
The moral government of self, an aim
Transcending far the deeds that gave them fame.
In silence without sullenness, endure
The ills of life which come to all too sure;
No cause have we, whate'er befalls, to complain
Our labours fruitless or our life in vain;
We fail to understand the will of God,
Or fail to do it, and must feel the rod.

Who would not grieve that we so often find
Some foolish trifle pleasing to the mind,
By every passing toy pained or amused;
Nor think of talents wasted, time abused.
Reflecting on the ill and good of life,
Gives strength of purpose to prolong the strife;
All tends to death, to bodily decay;
We cannot laugh, or frown our cares away:
Meet them we must, and if we seek for aid
We have the promise which shall never fade,
That, "As our day is, so our strength shall be,"
Till death shall from the warfare set us free.
Man—when debased, to sensual pleasure gives
His soul, and for the body only lives;
To him, so sunk, nought but the seen appeals,
Dead is his soul to what the unseen reveals;
He sneers, and calls fanatic he who dares
Boldy aver that Heaven doth answer prayers;
Yet when his strength by sickness is subdued,
The inner life is oftentimes renewed,
The spirit nature then asserts its sway,
The weakened body gives the spirit play.
No more the pampered slave of every lust,
The *man* re-lives, his soul shakes off the dust
In which was shrouded the celestial fire,
Which burns again, to gladden and inspire.

Oh, may the power to us be always given,
To keep our souls connected still to heaven,
By that electric, subtile unseen power
Which gives us guidance in each doubtful hour,
While all the powers of body and of mind
Are bent for good, to benefit our kind.
And may we ever list the inward voice,
Which, if obeyed, will make our hearts rejoice;
Acquire the power to conquer each desire
Which tends to damp or dim the spirit's fire,
And so complete a good and useful life,
Unstained by sin, and undismayed by strife;
Enjoy the good of life, the evil shun,
Not fearing death when life's short course is run:
The natural end, and outcome that, of all
The various changes which may here befall;
A change of scene, a journey all must take,
Which Jesus lived and travelled for *our* sake;
To which we look with reverence, without fear,
For through its various stages Jesus will be near.
A higher hope is ours, than theirs of old,
Who gave their lives for country or for gold:
A life eternal, for which now we train,
Through various shades of joy, and grief, and pain,

Which crowns the work, and sets the captive free,
The hidden mysteries of the heavens to see;
Where all-pervading love shines bright and clear,
'Midst peace and joy; and unassailed by fear,
The spirits washed in Jesus' blood proclaim,
In earth and heaven, the glories of His Name.

REST.

CHRISTIAN, art thou weary, oppress'd with many a care?
Come to the living fountain, find sweet comfort there;
Come to the precious Saviour, cast all thy care on Him,
Find there thy sure relief when grief thy cup doth brim.

Find there a faithful Counsellor, a peaceful, hallow'd rest,
When storms of fiercest passion surge o'er thy swelling breast;
And there the balm of Gilead, to ease the smarting pain
That oft assails thy fainting soul on life's rough, troubled main.

Find there a loving, trusty, and ever faithful
Friend
To guide thy wayward footsteps, e'en to thy
journey's end;
To ease thy burden'd heart of all its heavy care,
And in thy every sorrow to take a Brother's
share.

And then, when life's long, dreary, and toilsome
course is run,
The Jordan pass'd in safety, and set thy earthly
sun;
When thou dost lay thy aching head upon thy
Saviour's breast,
Then thou shalt taste the fulness of God's
eternal rest.

"BEHOLD! THE NIGHT COMETH."

A FAIR young girl was just entering in at the portals of the Celestial City; she had taken her last farewell of loving friends, when she raised herself up, and taking the hand of one who had been her choice companion in life, said: "Polly, darling, work for Jesus! for the night cometh." Then her feet touched the strand where there is "no night."

Night is coming—from the alleys
Heard ye not that stifled groan?
Will ye leave poor souls to perish—
Suffer them to die alone?

Night is coming—see the outcasts
Blindly wand'ring to and fro,
Oh, stretch out thy hand to save them,
Rescue them from sin and woe.

Tell to them the sad, sweet story,
Ringing yet through earth and sky,
How the Saviour *died* to ransom,
Laid His heavenly glory by.

Tell the life He gave so freely,
When He sojourned here with men,
Let the wretched wanderers know
Jesus Christ will not condemn.

Night is coming, hear the crying,
Wildly pealing through the earth!
Up then, Christian, life pursuing!
'Tis no time for thoughtless mirth.

Rescue souls from sin and danger,
Faithful be tho' foes arise:
While you parley with the tempter,
Some poor weary sinner dies.

Night is coming—Christian soldier,
Lift the cross of Jesus high!
Falter not in war or danger,
For your Saviour *dare* to die.

Night is coming—Art thou ready?
All the work and warfare o'er:
Rise then, Christian! Jesus calleth;
Night shall come for thee no more.

THE WELCOME SPRING-TIME.

WHEN dreary Winter's thrall has passed away,
And verdant Spring assumes her genial sway,
Sunshine and flowers rejoice the soul once more,
And bounteous Nature spreads again her store.
The busy husbandman surveys the field,
Verdant with promise of a plenteous yield,
And lifts his soul with inward praise to heaven,
From whence the seasons and earth's fruits are given.
The merchant sends his venture forth to sea,
With golden hopes a safe return to see;
The soul by sickness saddened, draws new life
From sights and sounds of gladness, then so rife;
The very beggar thinks, without a sigh,
Of houseless nights passed 'neath the open sky,
And in the morning almost joins the praise
Which feathered songsters to their Maker raise.

How much have we, then, reason to rejoice,
And raise to heaven with gladsome songs our voice,
Who, day by day, receive sufficient bread,
While on our homes are *constant* blessings shed!
Oh, may our hearts with grateful praise ascend
To God, for all the bounties He doth send!
Our Father sends the seasons year by year;
The birds He feeds, they know not care nor fear.
Then let us on His bounteous promise rest;
He will provide, if we but do our *best*.

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